

764 animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the
554 second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

776 The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

792 There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

792 to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

775 However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

774 What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the sigá or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The sigá, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Sigá. According to the Mossi, the sigá or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

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761 Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent *bendere*.

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On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the *Bendere Naba*, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the *Kambo Naba*, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the *Baloumi Naba* and including the *Samande Naba*, the *Samande Nabila*, the *Ouedrange Naba*, the *Kamsaogho Naba*, and the *Zusoaba Kasang*, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.⁶ With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the *Ouidi Naba* and including such men as the *Gounga Naba*, the *Larhalle Naba*, and the *Pwe Naba*, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the *Ouagadougou* congregation read aloud from the *Koran*. This part of the ceremony ended when the *Mogho Naba* rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.⁷

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A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the *Ouidi Naba* and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

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634¹³⁴ spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the vil-
 622 lagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people."
 782 In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against
 661 unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried
 793 to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices
 634 unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between
 782 the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the con-
 querors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was
 always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Teng-
 sobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighbor-
 ing societies.⁹ The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsoba-
 damba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the
 woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually
 force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued.
 On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the
 nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to inter-
 cede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed
 the priests to control them.

771 The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little
 795 effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional reli-
 643 gious system to bolster their political power.¹⁰ In fact, the Mossi rulers later
 used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the
 [797] aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the
 [648] fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts
 [167] failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from
 Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether
 they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During
 [793] certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbid-
 den by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.¹¹ At other
 [797] times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in
 converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Sava-
 dogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such im-
 portant local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

771 The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their
 795 Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and
 white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah
 • 792 and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him,
 and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the nam-
 tibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-
 Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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his guests.¹³ On the contrary, when the Imam visited the ruler on Fridays or during important festivals to read from the Koran, the sovereign gave him sweetened millet water and appropriate gifts.

Most Mossi rulers at all levels had Moslems among their councillors. These men were often the only persons who had traveled extensively outside the country (on pilgrimages to Mecca), and thus could counsel a ruler about how to deal with foreign visitors. Most early European visitors to Mossi country were either helped or hindered (chiefly the latter, it seems) by these travel-wise councillors. Crozat had difficulties with the Moslems long before he arrived in Mossi country proper. When he got to Lanfiera, the Mossi who lived there were alarmed, and refused to help him proceed to Ouagadougou despite his protestations that "I come for the good of all, white and black, that we may be together like brothers, since the same God has made us all." Crozat reports that his plea was in vain because "El Hadj All-Karl declared that he would not receive me, and he will not receive me. El Hadj is wise, El Hadj is prudent, El Hadj knows all, El Hadj does not make decisions without good foresight, and once made, he keeps them."¹⁴

Crozat had the same difficulty when he entered Mossi country. He tells us, "At Dounse [near Yako], for example, the marabouts did not look favorably upon my arrival, and it took a great deal of insistence on the part of Moussa to convince the Imam, my unwilling host, to present me to the chief who had expressed the desire to see me."¹⁴ Crozat also found that he had to lodge with the Imam when he arrived at Ouagadougou, and he was assigned the same huts "which had served Captain Binger," who had visited the capital before him. He was disappointed with his reception and declares:

I already knew from experience what sort of influence these men exercised over the chiefs. As a councillor of the chief, the Imam was overtly acknowledged as the second official in the village, but in reality he often commanded it. The Imam of Ouagadougou, therefore, could do much to help me or to hurt me. My decision to court him might flatter him, and that would be a move in the direction of winning his good graces, which, all things considered, was most important to me. The result was only partly in my favor. I succeeded insofar as the Imam was not hostile to me, but he did not help me as he might have.¹⁵

These Moslem councillors realized better than most other people what the visits of the Europeans implied for the independence of the country, and they tried their best to counsel the monarchs against receiving such visitors.

Beginning with Mogho Naba Doulogou (ca. 1750) Mossi sovereigns, whether Moslem or pagan, participated in the more important Moslem festi-

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Moslems. In return, he gave them millet water sweetened with honey, millet cakes, meat, and kola nuts.

The celebration of the festival in the districts was not as imposing as it was at Ouagadougou, but we have Binger's excellent eyewitness account of the festivities at Sakhaboutenga:

First of all, Boukary sent word that he would like me to accompany him to Sakhaboutenga, where it is his custom to go on the day of the festival. The chief's men spent the entire day attending to preparations: they distributed powder, cleaned guns, tried on harnesses, and polished copper fittings as we would in France on the eve of a great parade. . . . It was an occasion for revelry, and they took full advantage of it. They ate as much as they could, drank a great deal of beer, and fired many rounds of ammunition. . . . In the evening there was a moment of consternation: no one had seen the crescent; however, they consoled themselves by repeating that although it had not been sighted here, it had certainly shown itself elsewhere, and they sat down to drink beer all night long.

Monday, June 11. Early this morning Boukary sent a horseman to Sakhaboutenga to consult the marabouts. The messenger soon returned and assured the chief that the moon will be seen tonight. "All the marabouts have said so." The much-desired crescent appeared for a few moments this evening; shots were fired through half the night, and beer ran in floods. . . .

Tuesday, June 12. From four o'clock in the morning, the tam-tams sounded everywhere, and everyone was busy; it is obvious that this is the eve of an important event. . . . Half an hour after our departure we arrived at Sakhaboutenga. We dismounted and camped under the trees at the entrance of the village. Some Moslems from the neighborhood came, greeted Boukary, and offered him some kola nuts in lots varying from five to eight. But they always held them out in a fold of their robe [it being forbidden for a commoner to hand a gift directly to a chief]. A village nearby sent twelve large jars of beer.

From afar and from all directions, long files of Moslems emerged from the village on their way to the Imam's for prayers. Several onlookers arrived on donkeys from the surrounding countryside. The religious ceremony took place on a flat expanse to the east of the village. It was an impressive spectacle. The crowd was silent. The faithful, ranged in ranks about 20 feet deep, prostrated themselves and rose again in perfect harmony and with awesome slowness. From time to time the voice of the Imam was raised, and his *amina* [amen] was heard with deep reverence.

There were about three thousand persons of both sexes there, almost all of them dressed in white. The *bourrous* [robes], the red tarbooshes, and the multitude of black faces lent to the ceremony the grandiose character of an oriental fete. As soon as the prayers were over, Boukary Naba walked up to the Imam of Sakhaboutenga to the sound of tam-tams to receive his blessing and the good wishes of the Moslems, who wished on my illustrious host many horses and warriors. Boukary Naba ordered that the Imam be given a magnificent sheep and several sheepskins full of cowries. He presents this

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*175 European powers established in the vicinity realized that by controlling the
 *648 markets of the Mossi, they could become masters of all the commercial routes in the interior near the bend of the Niger River.¹⁹ The French pursued a more aggressive policy than any other power, dispatching mission after mission to the Mossi. In August 1890, Crozat was sent "to establish friendly relations between the French Sudan and the Mossi."²⁰ When he reached Ouagadougou in September, he found that Boukary Koutou had succeeded his brother and was reigning as Mogho Naba Wobogo.

Crozat, like Binger, was disappointed by the appearance of the Mossi capital, which he describes in the following words: "Like the smallest of Mossi hamlets, the capital is but a village surrounded by fields, and except for the absence of forest vegetation, nothing would indicate to the traveler that this is a great center and the home of the sovereign."²¹ Most European travelers in the Sudan were disappointed by the capitals of African states. They could not reconcile the glowing reports of the Africans with their own ideas of royal splendor. Crozat was even more disappointed with Boukary Koutou. He states:

*175 The king of Ouagadougou is the same Boukary Naba who was Binger's cordial
 *648 host at Banema; but what I was told about him and what I saw a little
 643 later were two different things, and the difference was to the ruler's disadvantage. Binger knew him as friendly, dignified, simple, somewhat opportunistic, and showing very little displeasure at his brother and predecessor who had exiled him from Ouagadougou. I found myself in the presence of a monarch very proud of his newly obtained but long-hoped-for dignity (Boukary, in effect, became king at Ouagadougou only because his brother died without male issue). Yet he was timid, shaky, and lived confined to his palace with his servants and wives, not daring to go out. He spent his time consulting holy men who had him under their control and who used up the resources of the realm to contrive the oddest and most expensive charms in order to allay the ruler's fear that he would be assassinated.²²

Mogho Naba Wobogo did little to change Crozat's opinion of him. He hesitated to grant the Frenchman an interview because his councillors had advised against it. When Crozat was finally permitted to see the ruler, he told him:

I was sent to you by the white chief who rules all the countries of the blacks from Bamako to Kayes, and from Fouta-Djallon to Kaarta. I have come in his name, and in the name of the ruler of all the French, to greet you and congratulate you on your ascension to the throne and to thank you for having received so well my countryman, the white man, who came to the Mossi two years ago. My superior has instructed me to remain with you for several days, so that you may have the opportunity to find out that whites will not harm you, and so that you may become our friend.²³